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CEREBUS MELMOTH

FIVE

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144
MAR

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

A few loose ends.

★★★★★★★★★★

I am still receiving (and printing) a number of letters from male and female feminists. I print them in the interest of fairness, but they do not follow any pattern of logic which I am able to discern. For one thing they won't let go of this national day care issue. As it stands now and has stood for centuries, babies are financed by men, whether those men are boy-friends, live-in boyfriends, husbands, ex-husbands, combinations of current and ex-husbands or grandfathers (in the case of women who return home after a divorce). If you make child-raising (five days a week, eight hours a day) a government responsibility you are relying on taxes to raise your child. Who pays most of the taxes? That's right. Men. Feminists are (to use an illustration from nature) attempting to sit on the nest to keep the hatchlings warm while, simultaneously, foraging for food. It is not possible to do both at the same time and, in their singular thought processes, this is the fault of men. It seems logical to me that you have to find a nest-sitting substitute (ie. Jane Pauley and Garry Trudeau) who can work at home, or you have to be willing to stay home and raise the children while the male goes out and forages on your behalf and on behalf of your off-spring (the traditional marriage). As soon as you drag the government into it, you are advocating making it the inalienable right of a parent to have his or her children raised by strangers at taxpayers' expense.

Almost every feminist correspondent misunderstood my waitress example. If it costs the taxpayer $10,000 a year to provide national day care for each child and, on average, those needing the program are paying 4,000 a year in taxes, each day care "slot" is going to be a net loss of $6,000. Multiplied by millions of participants, the first five years of any such program is going to make the S & L crisis look like a small bookkeeping error. You could literally save billions of dollars by paying mothers $1,000 a week to stay home and take care of their own children. In a grossly over-populated world, that makes no sense to me.

★★★★★★★★★★

I use the word "cunt" nowadays because women have become proud of the term "bitch". Believe me any woman who says "Oh, I'm such a bitch—giggle giggle" is beyond bitch.

And there is only *one* thing beyond bitch.

★★★★★★★★★★

On the subject of Bill Loebs picking up *Journey* and taking it to Fantagraphics.

In the case of an artist getting a cash advance to produce, say, a fifty-page comic story; well, if you're stupid enough to take money in advance for creative work, you should produce that work. That was not the case with Bill. We solicited orders for *Journey*, printed the books, shipped them, got paid by the distributors, deducted the printing costs and an office fee from revenues and split the remaining profits seventy-five per cent for the artist and twenty-five per cent for A-V. At one point Bill and I met for several hours at a convention and he expressed a number of reservations about the way things were going. He wanted more advertising and promotion among other things. I pointed out that we published all the books on the same basis we did *Cerebus*; bare bones. Solicit the book, print the book, ship the book, bill the distributors. I pointed out that he had more than twice the circulation *Cerebus* had at the equivalent issue (number eighteen or nineteen, I think). Bill acknowledged my views in his very gentlemanly way, but remained obviously unconvinced and very, very worried. A couple of weeks later, we got a phone call from Kim Preney (Hi, Kim) saying Bill had walked in and taken back the original art for the issue currently in production. It seemed pointless to force some kind of confrontation or another round of negotiation. On the issue of advertising and promotion, alone, we had an unresolvable conflict. I knew that *any* publisher he took *Journey* to would do more advertising than we had done.

Obviously, in the course of doing *Journey* for Fantagraphics, Bill discovered that he could not make enough money doing *Journey*, period, and that a lack of advertising and promotion was not the problem. Now he works just about full-time for DC/Piranha and I would assume he parted company with Fantagraphics with no hard feelings on either side.

To me, that confirms that free movement works. Bill wasn't satisfied at A-V; went to Fantagraphics and wasn't satisfied there and went to DC and *was* satisfied. No lawyers, no lawsuits, no heated confrontations.

Free movement.

Rah rah.

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MELMOTH
a short story
•
(Cerebus 139 to Cerebus 150)

Jnx_Scanz_HaCsA !!!

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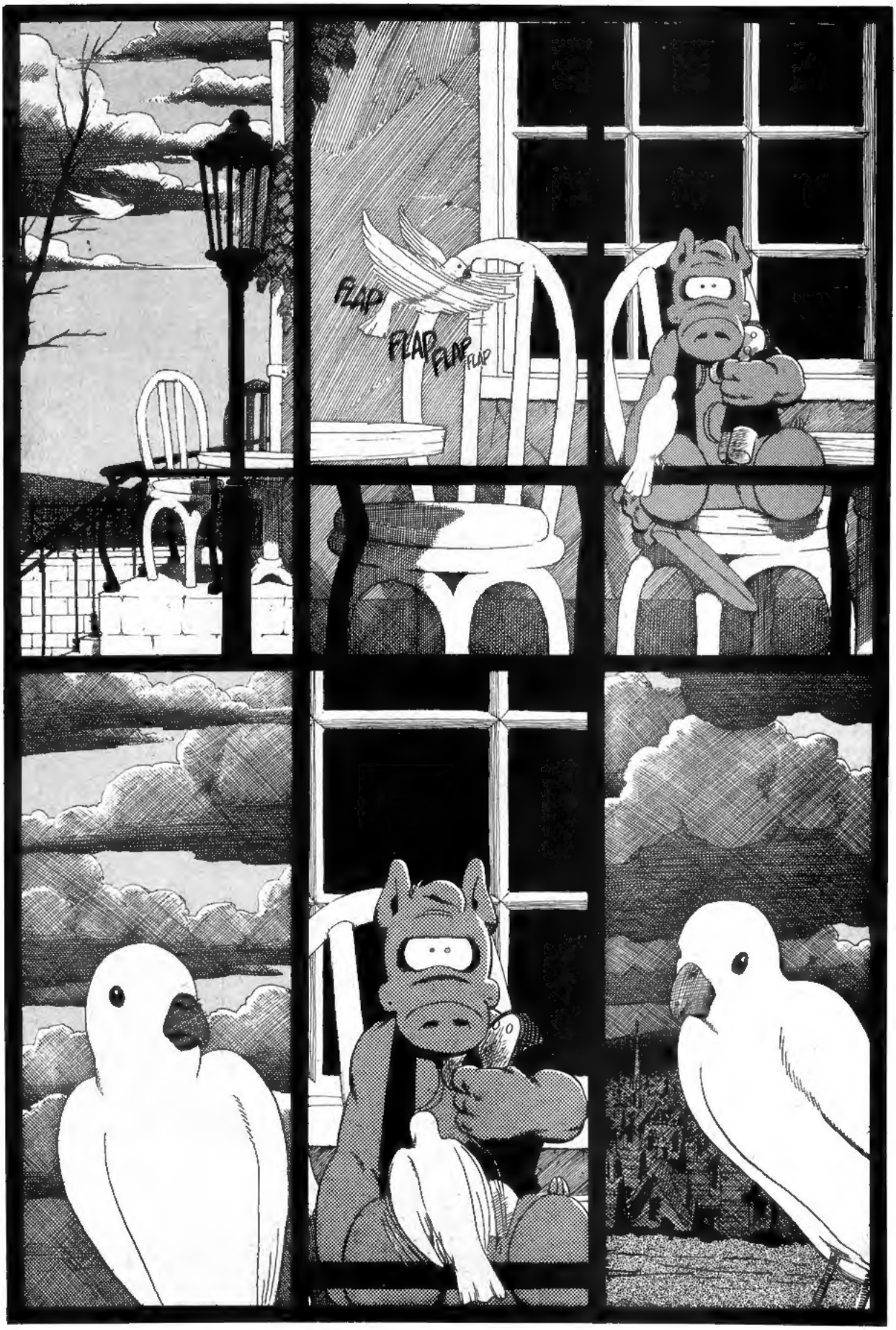
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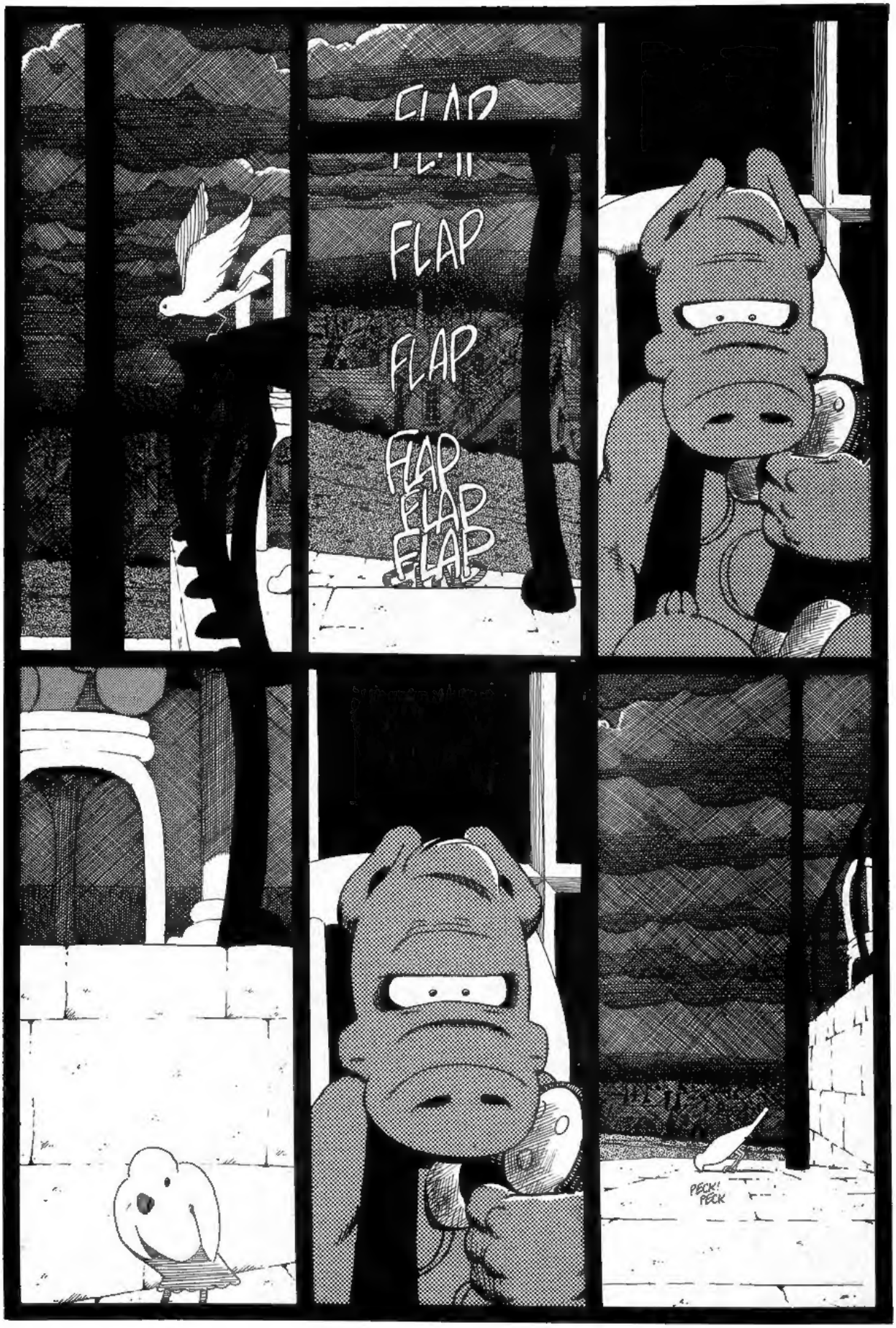
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP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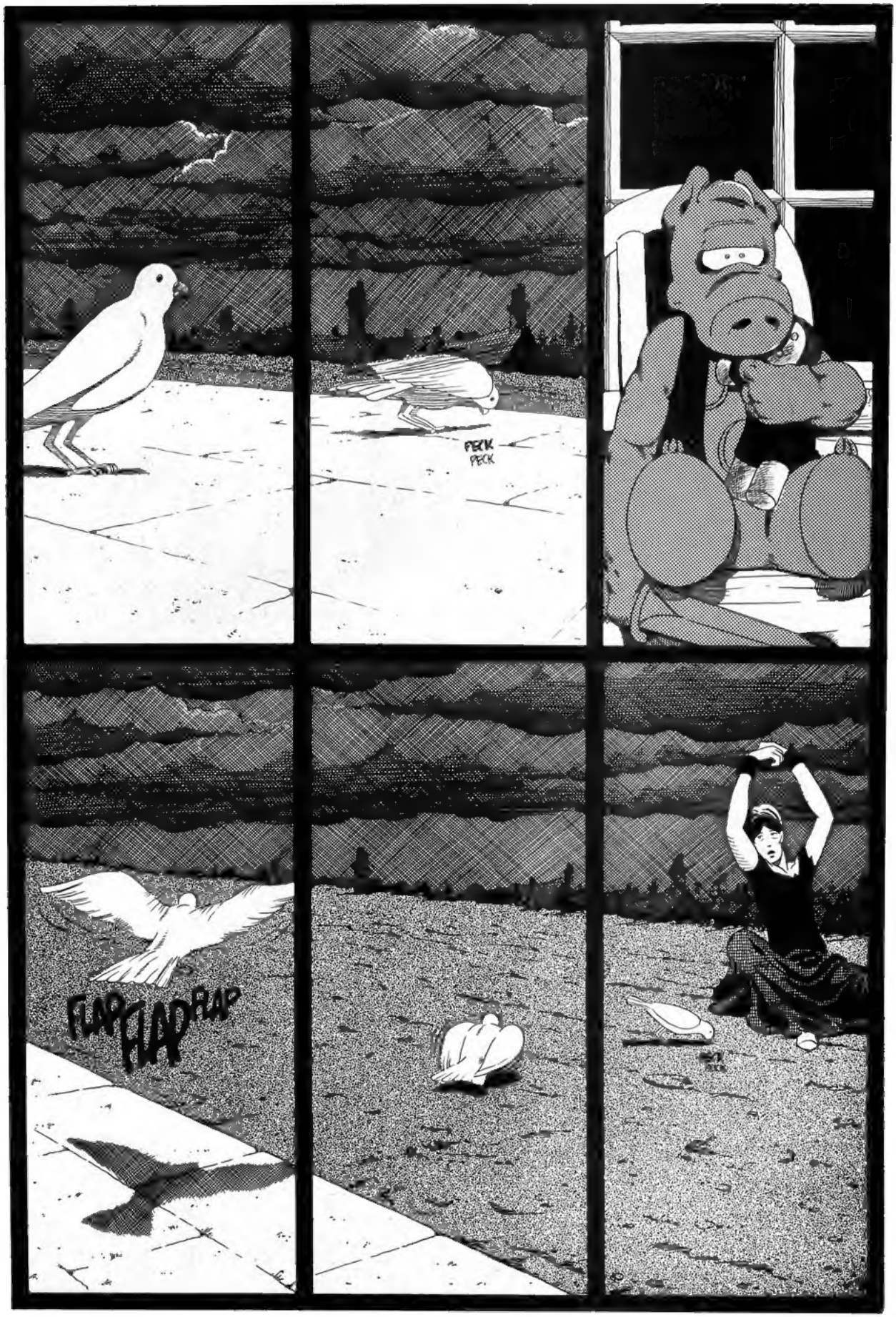
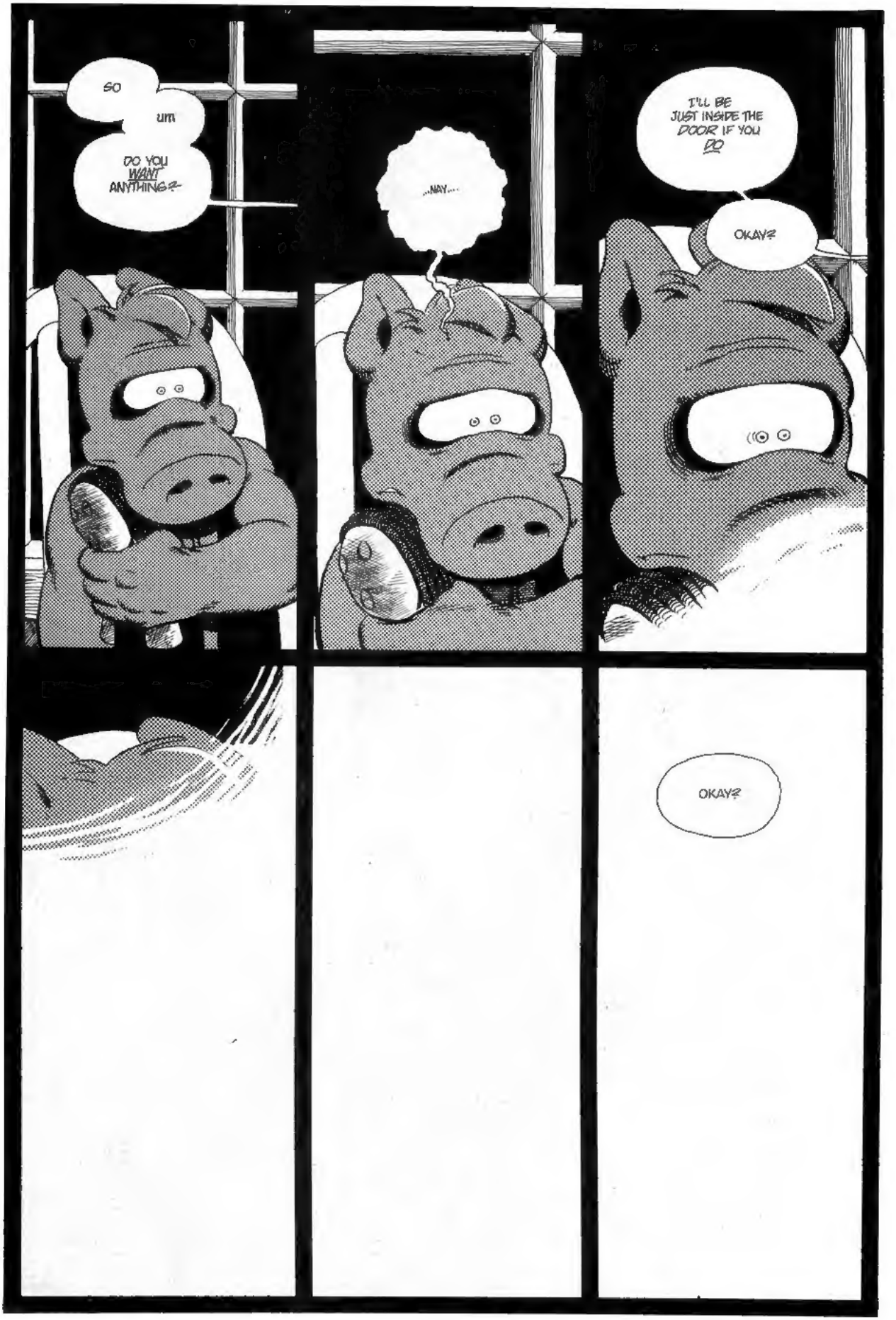
PECK!
PECK


PECK
PECK
FLAP FLAP FLAP

EXCUSE ME?

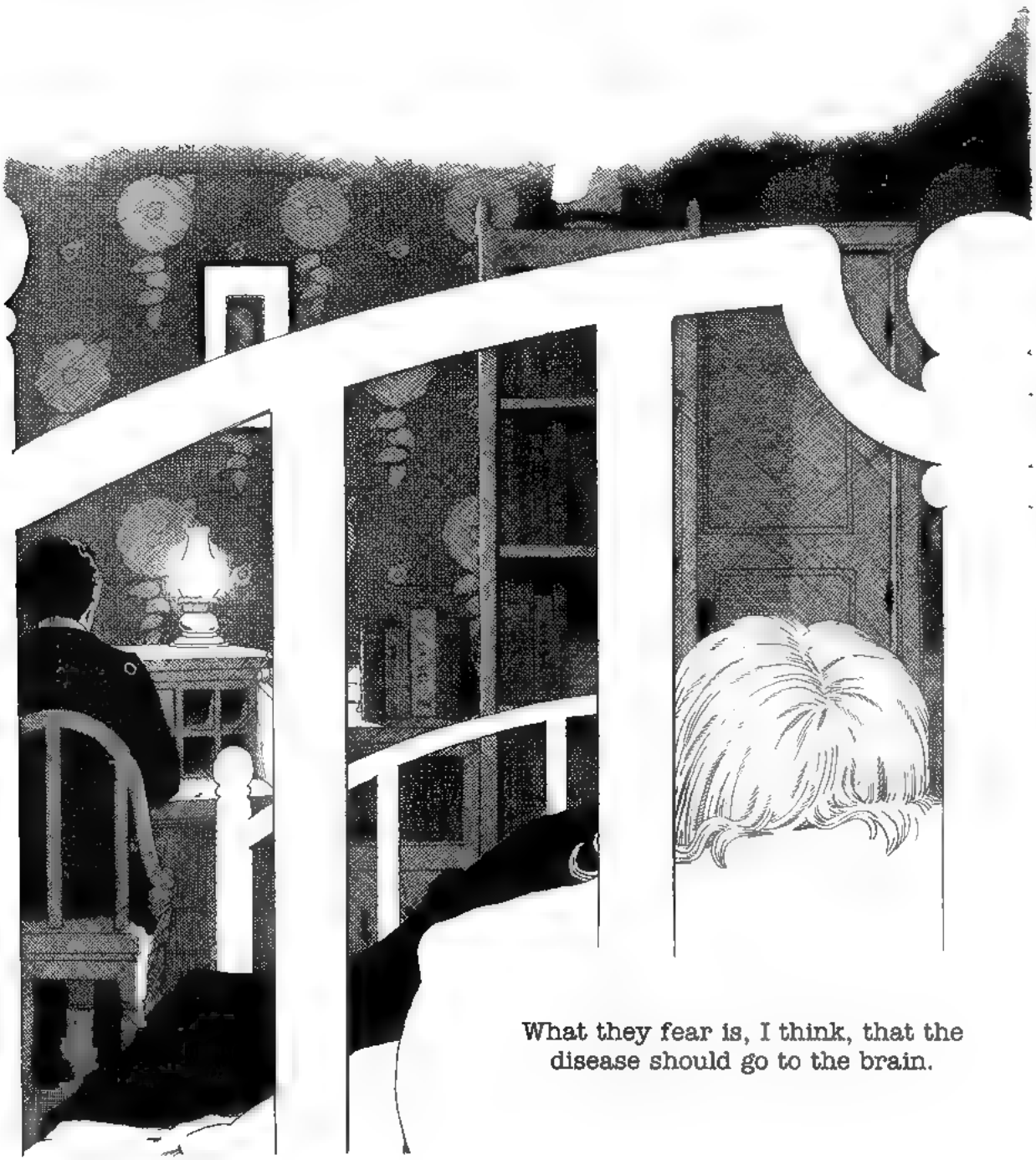
I'M DORIS
YOUR NEW WAITRESS
FLIP
AND I SHOULD TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU?
DINO SAID YOU'RE A REALLY IMPORTANT CUSTOMER?


SO
um
DO YOU WANT ANYTHING?
...NAY...
I'LL BE JUST INSIDE THE DOOR IF YOU DO
OKAY?
OKAY?

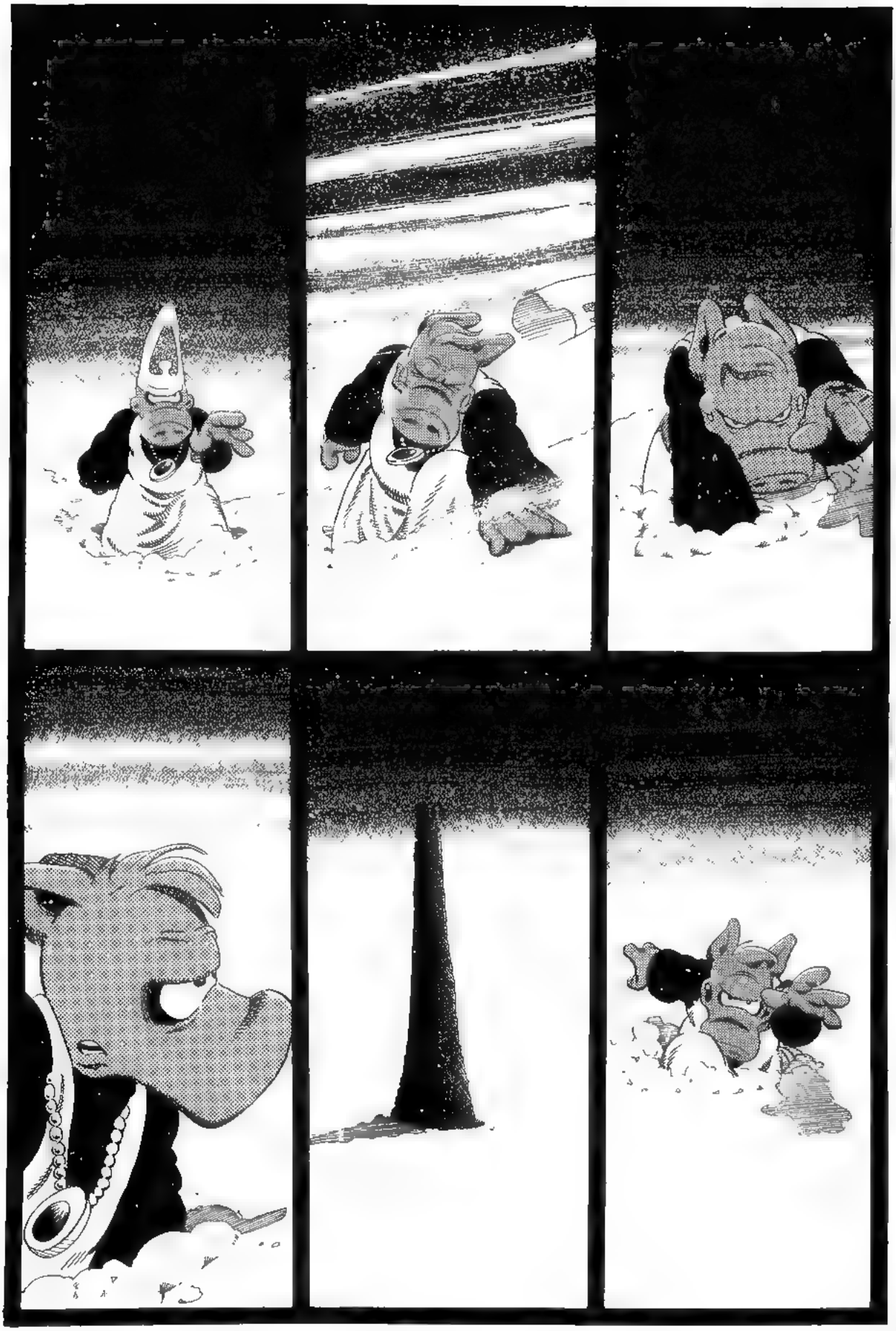
My dear Robbie

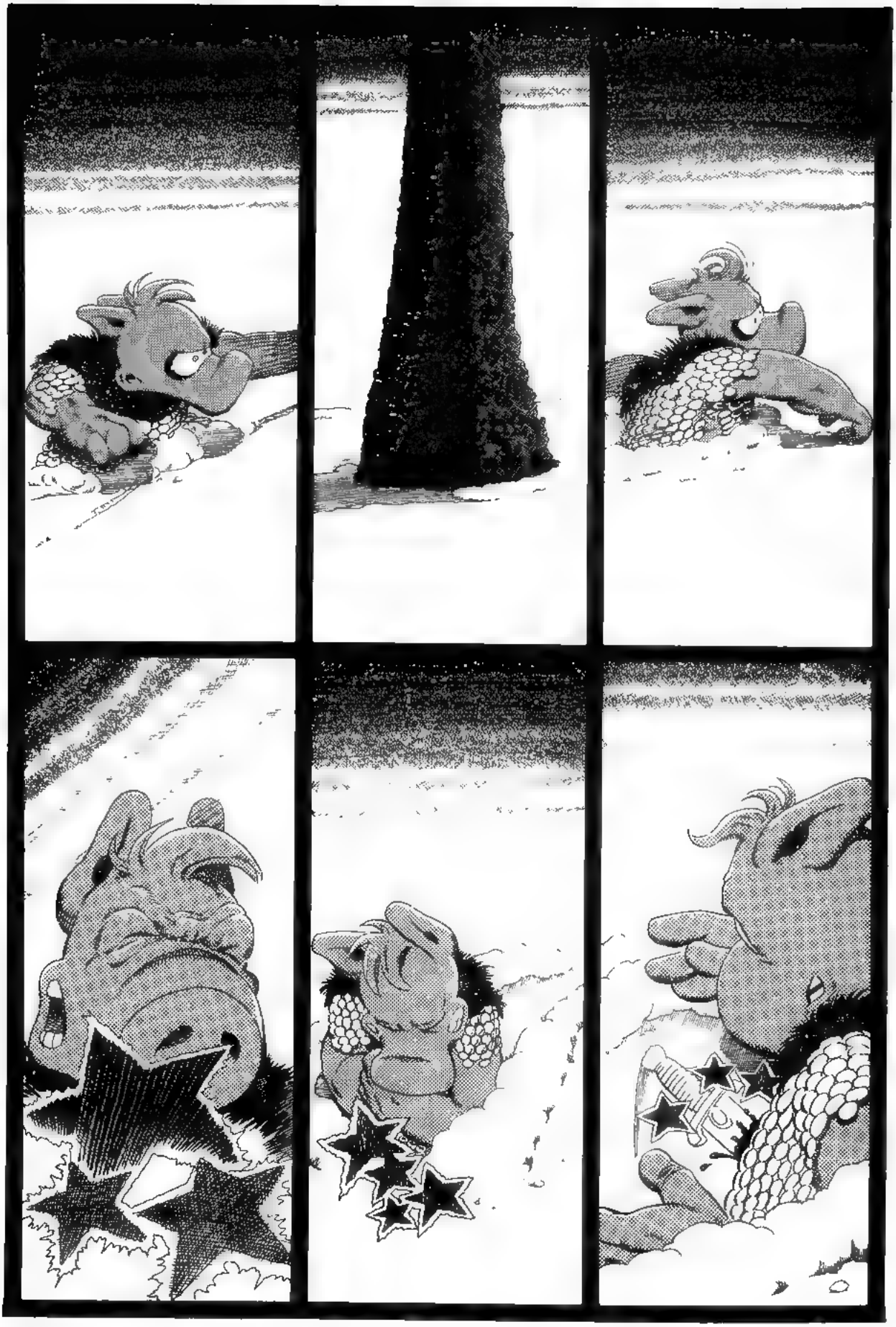
I had today a long talk with the *patron* of the Hôtel d'Alsace. At the consultation yesterday the doctors gave very little hope of Oscar's recovery, and Tucker was very anxious that you should be sent for; I think he does not know that you are not in Iest. I told the *patron* that I would see Tucker and communicate with you, and the *patron* wants you to write to him as to anyone who should be sent for in the case of Oscar getting worse. He wanted to know if his children should not be written to, but I told him that I would write to you. Certainly in the event of Oscar being at the last gasp or even dying, I do not know who to send for; someone should be there to look after his affairs, besides the business questions which may arise. I shall probably see Tucker tomorrow or the next day.

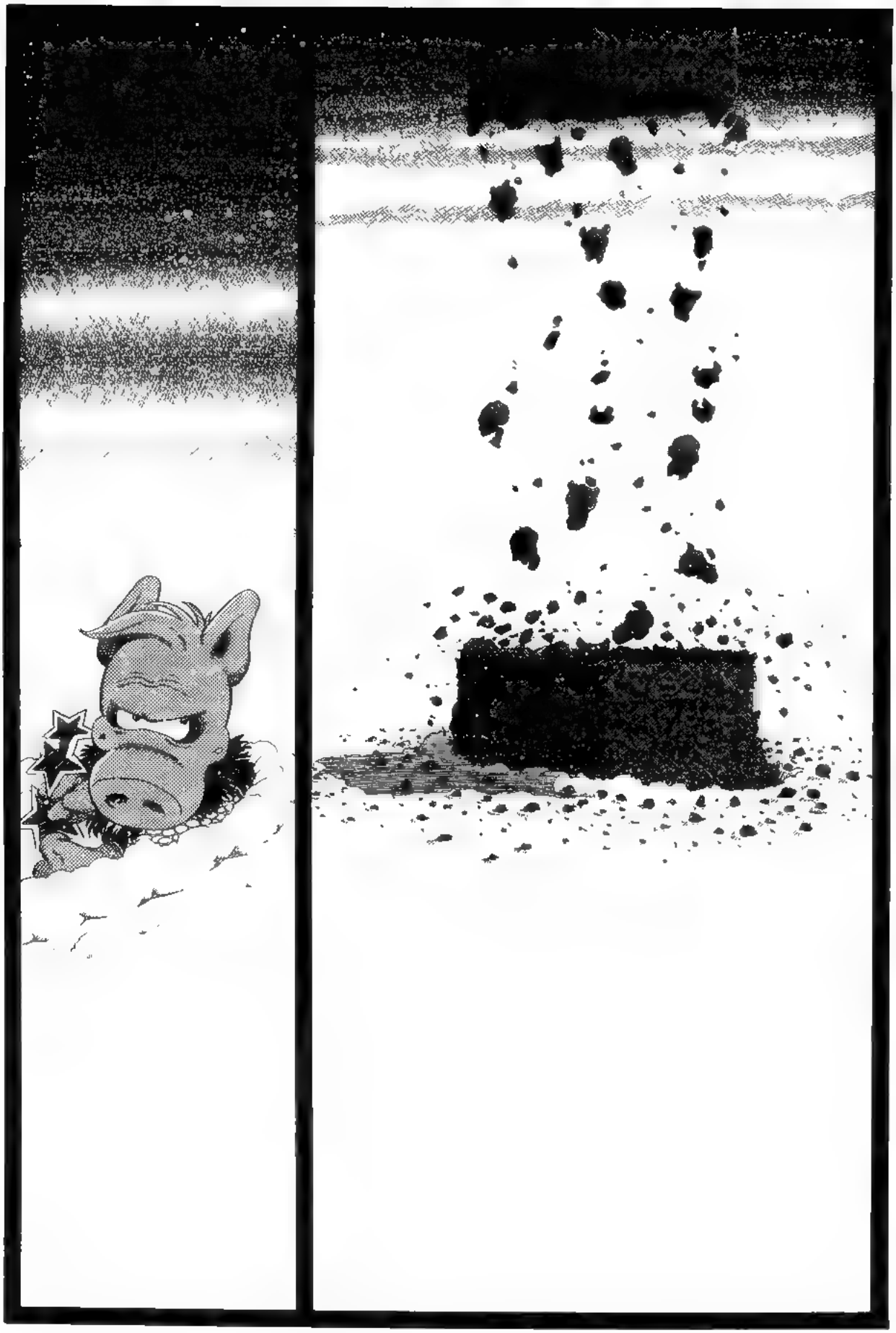
As to Oscar, he of course knows nothing of what they say, but he is beyond taking notice, his mind wanders and he sleeps. That is I think partly the result of the morphine. He welcomed me today and was pleased to see me and we had a moment's lucid conversation, but he then relapsed into drowsiness and when he did speak his mind seemed to wander. Of course this may be the result of drugs. I myself cannot help thinking he may yet live to furnish Frank Harris with another plot, but I may be quite wrong.



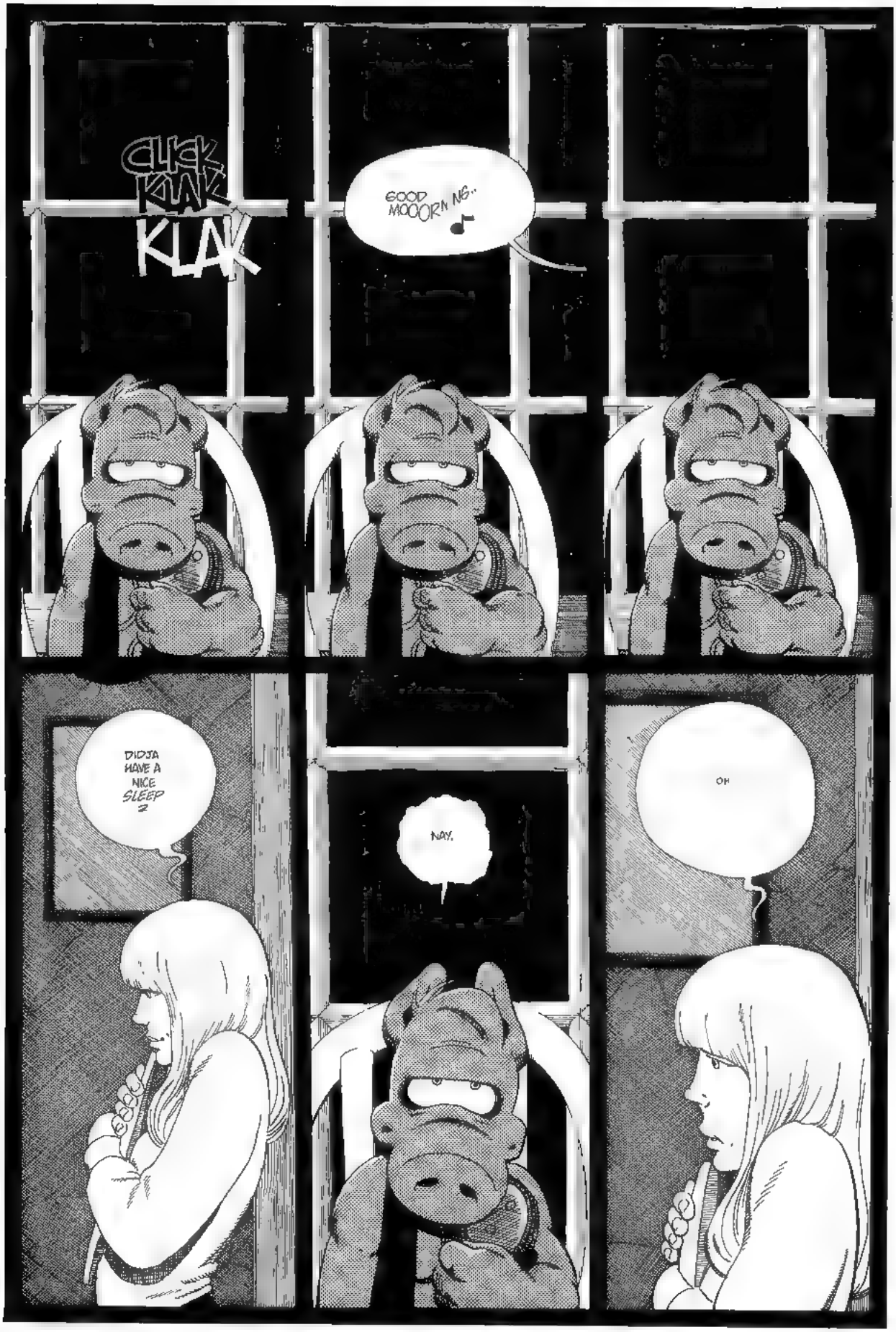
What they fear is, I think, that the disease should go to the brain.

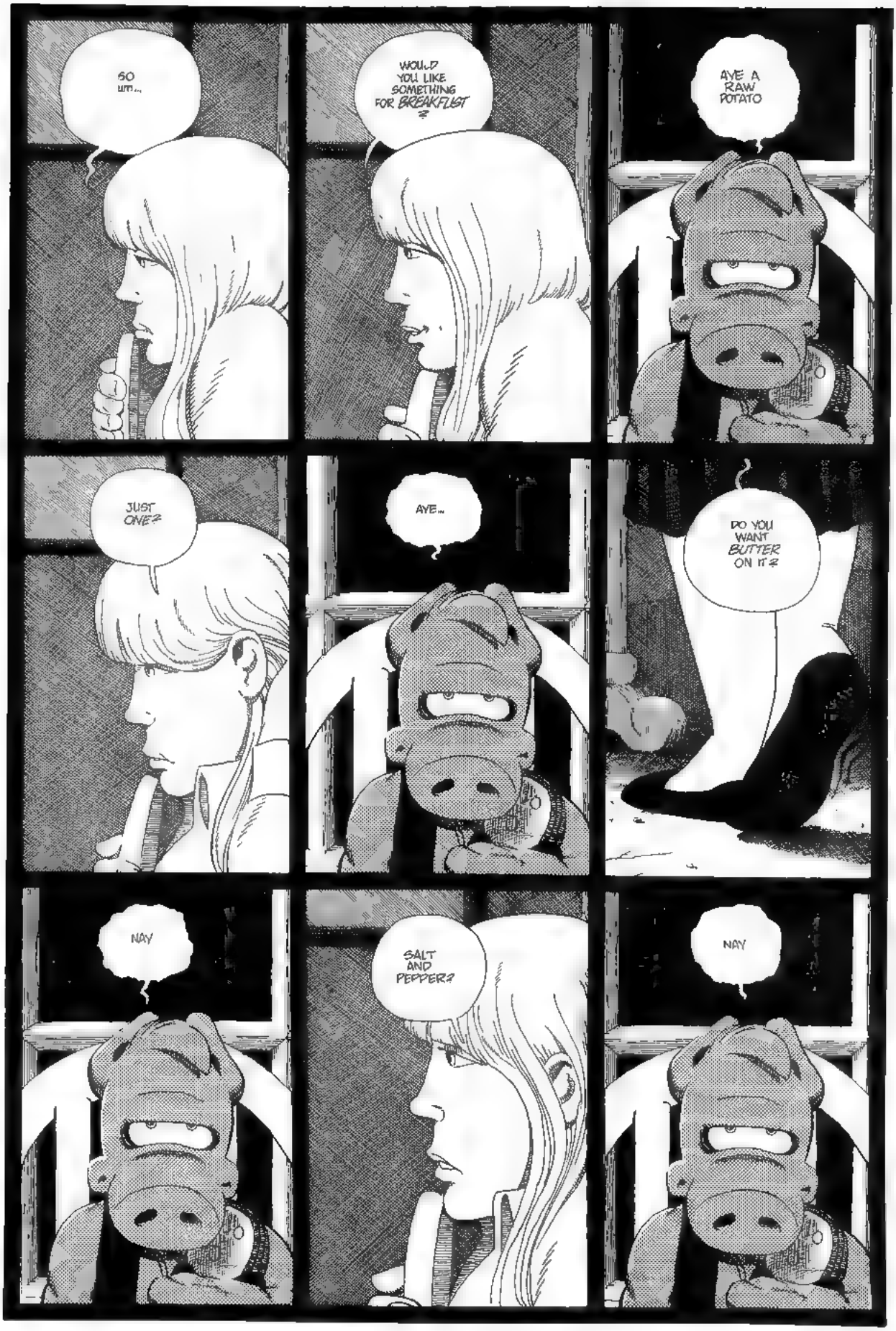


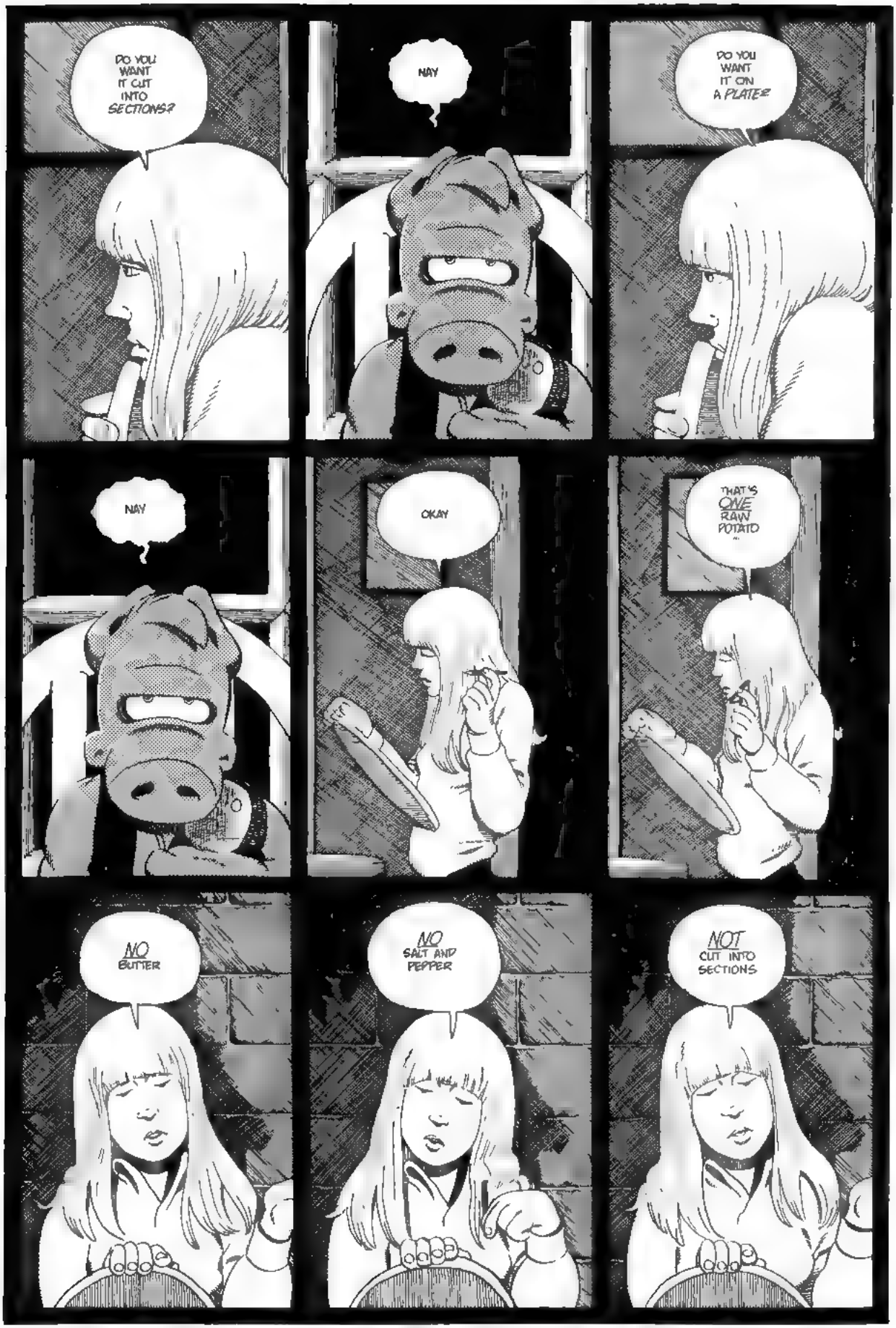




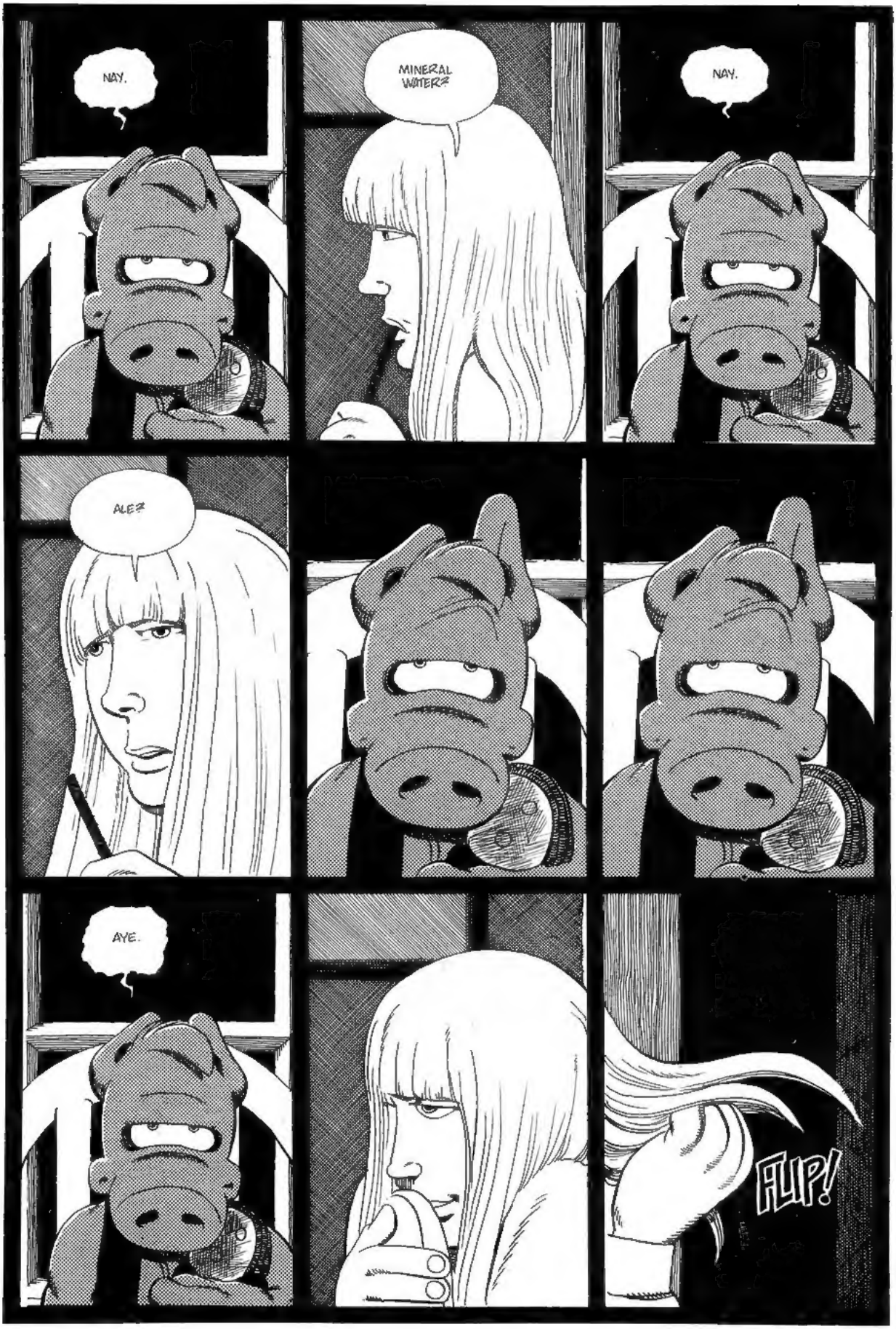
CLICK
KLAK
KLAK


CLICK
KLAK
KLAK
GOOD MOOORN NG..
DIDJA HAVE A NICE SLEEP 2
NAY.
OH


SO
um...
WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING FOR BREAKFAST?
AYE A RAW POTATO
JUST ONE?
AYE...
DO YOU WANT BUTTER ON IT?
NAY
SALT AND PEPPER?
NAY


DO YOU WANT IT CUT INTO SECTIONS?
NAY
DO YOU WANT IT ON A PLATE?
NAY
OKAY
THAT'S ONE RAW POTATO
NO BUTTER
NO SALT AND PEPPER
NOT CUT INTO SECTIONS

NOT ON A PLATE
SKTCHA SKTCH SKTCH
SKTCH
SKTCH SKTCHA SKTCH SKTCH SKTCH
SKTCH SKTCHA KTCHSKTCH SKTCHA SKTCHA SKTCHA SKTCHA SKTCHA
DO YOU WANT ANYTHING TO DRINK WITH THAT?
FLIP!
NAY.
ORANGE JUICE?
NAY.
TONIC WATER?


NAY.
MINERAL WATER?
NAY.
ALE?
AYE.
FLIP!

Oscar is not in want of anything as he is not sensible enough to desire anything. He is very difficult and rude, but to me he was very nice. The *patron* warned me not to be annoyed if he was rude. The *patron* is awfully good to him, but a bit of a bore. You had better write to Bosie, I think. I will do so but am not sure of his address, and I think I will send a line to Frank Harris to tell him how serious Oscar's condition is. As a matter of fact Oscar does not speak of Frank Harris, he is past that for the moment, but I think we shall be able to judge better of his condition when he has been free from morphia. Oscar asked if you had sent any details of your life at Beduin. Ever yours,

Reg